



# Osceola County

## 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

[msue.msu.edu](http://msue.msu.edu)



## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Michigan State University Extension is pleased to bring you this report of the work we have done in Osceola County during 2017. The partnership that has been developed through the Cooperative Extension system for over 100 years brings valuable federal and state resources to the local level to provide programming, research, and services in youth development, agriculture, community development, natural resources, health and nutrition, and so much more.



By receiving local support for our programming, we are able to bring the research and education from our state's land grant university to meet the needs of the local community.

Inside this report you will see the highlights of the work we have done during this past year. We look forward to continuing to serve the residents of Osceola County for another 100 years.

Shari Spoelman,  
District Coordinator

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## MEASURING IMPACT

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS	
Agriculture & Consumer Horticulture .....	1,393
Health & Nutrition .....	2,420
Community, Economic Development & Natural Resources .....	54
Youth Served .....	2,044
Soil Tests .....	183

FUNDING
2017 MSUE County Budget
\$113,093
MSU contribution
\$257,150

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### MISSION:

**Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.**

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# Developing Youth and Communities



**When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).**

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active.

4-H'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

## 4-H by the Numbers

The Osceola County 4-H program is a strong program that is growing and diversifying to meet the needs of the many families across Osceola County. Below are some numbers that show the continued success of, and participation in, the Osceola County MSU Extension 4-H Children and Youth program:

- 512 youth enrolled in club-based 4-H in 2017
- 73 adult 4-H leaders actively volunteered their time in 2017
- 23 4-H Clubs
- 1,851 youth were reached through programs such as Project Rural Education Days and health education

## Healthy Lifestyles Education

During the 2017 year Osceola County 4-H and Osceola County SNAP-ED presented healthy lifestyles education while demonstrating the “smoothie bike” at many events from schools, club meetings and even the fair. In all, the smoothie bike reached 170 youth during the year.

## Science Blast in the Class

Osceola County 4-H continues to be present in the schools. Using a nationally recognized curriculum, Osceola County 4-H presented Science Blast in the Class three times in the 2017 year. Osceola County 4-H worked with Evert Middle School to get youth excited about science. Through several sessions, Osceola County 4-H actively engaged 139 youth.



## Developing Youth and Communities, continued

### Horse Clubs

In 2017, Osceola County had 60 youth participate in multiple horse events. During the summer months youth have eight opportunities to show their horse in addition to the horse shows at the fair. Many youth use the 10 shows to work with their horse to perfect showing disciplines to prepare for the Michigan State 4-H Horse Show which took place in August. *Osceola County was represented by 12 youth at the State Horse Show.*

### Shooting Sports

The oldest 4-H club in Osceola County is our Bad Toads Shooting Sports. Shooting sports have been strong for over twenty years in Osceola County. In 2017, we had 97 youth participate in our 12 week program. In shooting sports the youth learn proper gun handling with BB guns and pellet guns. During the program, youth learn to shoot from four positions: prone, laying, kneeling, and standing. After the fourth week of shooting the youth are broken into separate shooting brackets so youth are competing with others at the same skill level. BB guns are used until youth are 13, at which time they start shooting pellet guns.

### Osceola County Fairs

Osceola County 4-H has a strong traditional 4-H program in which a youth raises an animal and takes it to the county fair. Some of these animals are shown and brought home and others are shown and sold through an auction at the end of the week. During the summer youth have two opportunities to take their animals to a fair: the Marion Fair and the Osceola County Fair. In 2017, 35 youth participated in the market livestock program at the Marion Fair and sold 66 market projects. In 2017, 216 youth participated in the market livestock program at the Osceola County Fair and sold 371 market projects. At both fairs we have our horse program and breeding stock youth participating. Many youth also do “still” projects and present them at the fairs. Total exhibitors at the fair were 466 with 2633 exhibits. Out of those totals 292 were 4-H youth exhibiting 2066 exhibits .



Kids love playing “Ag Olympics” at the Marion Fair



Osceola County Fair auction

## Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Eric Martin of Gingrich Meadows speaks to 4<sup>th</sup> Graders at Rural Education Days on what dairy cows like to eat.



### Project Rural Education Days

In the spring of 2017, Osceola County 4-H and Farm Bureau hosted the 25th Annual Project Rural Education Days. Over 300 students from all four school districts in Osceola County attended Gingrich Meadows and Rose Lake Park to learn about agriculture and natural resources in a nontraditional school setting. During their visit to Gingrich Meadows, youth learn about calf management, milk production and nutrition, feeding dairy cows, and manure management. When they visit Rose Lake Park, students learn about electrical safety, training Labrador retrievers, wild turkeys, draft horses and recreational safety. In the nutrition session, youth were eager to learn how to make a smoothie by pedaling a bike.

In 2017, all participants received a wrist band celebrating 25 years. Jerry Lindquist presented a declaration to Gingrich Meadows and Osceola County Parks for the 25 years of partnership.

### Celebrating 25 years of Project Rural Education Days and partnerships....



The Gingrich Family



MSU Extension's Jerry Lindquist presenting Gingrich Farms and Osceola County Parks with a proclamation from the State of Michigan.



Past and current 4-H Program Coordinators—Dave Brooks, Lori Leudeman, and Jacob Stieg—with Jerry Lindquist.

# Ensuring Strong Communities



## Homeownership & Foreclosure Prevention

MI Money Health's team of knowledgeable, straight-forward financial pros demystify common money and homeownership best practices with university-backed, research-based programs and resources to help Michigan residents navigate through whatever fiscal challenges life throws their way.

**Homeownership Education:** This course helps participants make informed choices about the true costs of homeownership. Bonus? Completing the course can help Michigan residents qualify for down-payment and other assistance programs.

- 2 Osceola County families received pre-purchase counseling.

**Foreclosure:** Our certified housing counselors help Michigan residents navigate through the tough decisions and explore options to avoid foreclosure whenever possible. With the many triage calls for foreclosure prevention,

- 7 Osceola County families received face-to-face, one to one, or over the phone counseling to assist with mortgage or delinquent taxes.
- 9 Osceola County families received initial intake call, got information, answers to questions, and or refer to another agency.

## Step Forward Michigan

55 Osceola families received help from Step Forward Program approving distressed homeowners who received \$410,261.63 for delinquent mortgage and property tax assistance.

## Money Management

5 Osceola County families participated in one-time presentations either in person or via webinar that pertained to a variety of financial capacity topics.



# Ensuring Strong Communities

## Celebrating 100 years of Cooperative Extension in Osceola County



Osceola County MSU Extension celebrated 100 years of serving the residents of Osceola County in 2017. MSU Extension staff hosted an open house in October with a display of historical materials from over the years. The open house was attended by many county residents and staff. Some traveled quite a ways to help celebrate the tradition of MSU's education, research, and outreach in the county. Celebrity guests included former and retired MSU staff.

## Reducing foodborne illness through education of individuals, small businesses

### Some comments from classes include:

*"I found this training to be very helpful and full of information."*

*"I learned a ton about how to properly cook and store food."*

*"It was great! The hands on examples, games, and demonstrating were very helpful."*

Foodborne illness remains a concern in Michigan, as evidenced by the recent Hepatitis A outbreak. One way this disease is transmitted is through food, making safe food handling crucial to preventing the spread of this virus. Each year, 1 in 6 Americans gets sick by consuming contaminated foods or beverages, and most cases are not reported. MSU Extension food safety programs train participants to prevent foodborne illness associated with unsafe food handling practices, such as the **Cottage Food Law** class where Osceola County residents participated.

The incidence of foodborne illness translates into 48 million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Children account for half of all of these illnesses. Most susceptible to this are young [children under five](#) who have the highest rates, as reported by the CDC. These statistics were the foundation for the development of a new curriculum titled Safe Food = Healthy Kids. Kara Lynch was the lead Educator for a Michigan Health Endowment Fund grant that provided money in support of development of this new program. An innovative approach using texting complements this curriculum, in which text messages are sent out twice per week to send food safety messages and share resources. This program was launched in the fall of 2017 with participants from Osceola County.



# Keeping People Healthy



Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

## Fostering Health through Nutrition and Physical Activity

### Our Challenge

Obesity has important consequences on our nation's health and economy. It is linked to a number of chronic diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers. Among adults, the medical costs associated with obesity are estimated at 147 billion dollars. According to The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America released in 2017, Michigan has the 10th highest adult obesity rate in the nation.

Michigan's adult obesity rate is currently 32.5 percent, up from 22.1 percent in 2000 and from 13.2 percent in 1990.

### Healthier Lives through Nutrition Education

Michigan State University Extension supports individual and community level, or public health approaches, to prevent obesity. Through the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), we provide exemplary nutrition and physical activity education for limited resource participants where they eat, learn, live, work, play, and shop. Program and outreach efforts aim to increase the likelihood limited resource youth, adults and seniors make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

**\$1 = \$10**



EVERY \$1 SPENT ON NUTRITION EDUCATION SAVES AS MUCH AS \$10 IN LONG-TERM HEALTH CARE COSTS.



## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS REACHED THROUGH NUTRITION EDUCATION

**1,135**

Adults



**1,161**

Youth



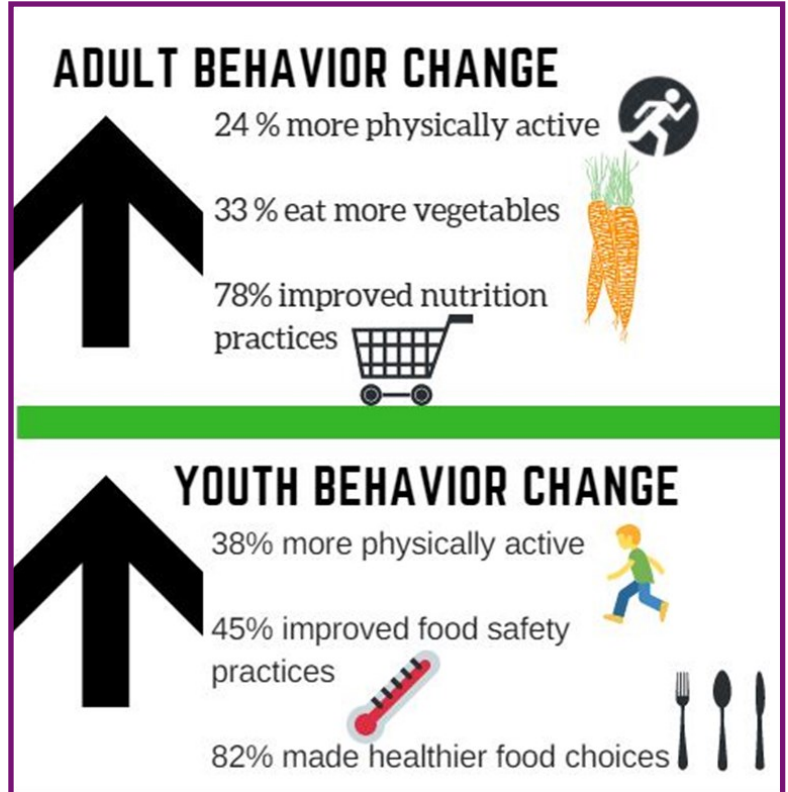
# Keeping People Healthy



**Grow it, Try it, Like it is a garden-themed nutrition education program that introduces children to three fruits and three vegetables and offers several opportunities for hands on learning through movement, song and dance.**

Program Instructor Renee Sanders draws from evidence-based curricula to reinforce healthy eating and physical activity promotion among youth, adults and seniors throughout Osceola County. One noteworthy success has been a partnership with the Eastwood Early Childhood Community Center. Renee initiated a new relationship with this site and as a result, brought interactive nutrition education to all of the North East Michigan Community Services Association Head Starts. MSU Extension continues to have support from educators in the community. This comment from a local Head Start teachers speaks to the level of engagement and enthusiasm Renee brings to her classrooms using the Grow it, Try it, Like it curriculum.

“The children love to have Renee come to our classroom and read to them, but their favorite is the mystery bag, where they get to feel the Tasty Acre Farms food, before they taste it. We love the map posted in our room, and the children always want the strawberry to be the next food.”



## **Making the healthy choice easier - Supporting Changes to the Policy, System and Environment**

MSU Extension works to create a culture of health and wellness by providing coaching at the organization level, whether it's in the workplace, schools, or childcare facilities. We provide technical assistance in assessing the environment, including policies and the physical space, creating an action plan, and implementing the action plan to work towards best practices related to nutrition and physical activity.



“Chopped for Kids”  
at  
Winterfest  
2017.



Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency  
Osceola County Community Baby Shower



Higher Grounds—Angela Hunter, Cooking Matters volunteer,  
Renee Sanders and Farah Bisel



“Show Me  
the Money”

“Show Me the Money” - MSU Extension’s Renee Sanders,  
Kara Lynch, Teagen Lefere



**Stress Less with Mindfulness** introduces participants to the experience and practice of mindfulness to reduce stress. Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness is effective in reducing stress related symptoms such as worry, depression, and physical tension, and may be helpful in managing chronic conditions such as cardiac disease and diabetes. Five series with 45 participants attended a Stress less with Mindfulness class. As a result of this series of classes 98% of participants can identify mindfulness tools to help manage stress, 96% now use mindful breathing to calm themselves in the face of stress, 96% describe how a mindful perspective can change reactions to daily stressors and 95% are more positive about dealing with stress in their life by using mindfulness tools. These audiences included seniors to youth.

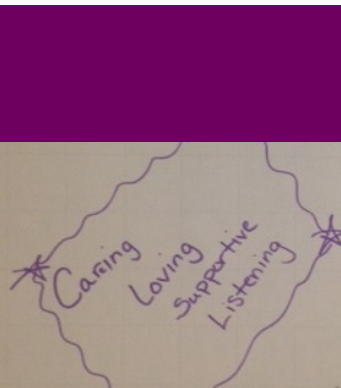
**RELAX: Alternatives to Anger** is an educational program that actively engages participants to gain knowledge and skills to constructively deal with anger. The core concepts include recognizing anger signals, empathizing, listening, accepting that others' anger is not about you, and letting go of the past in order to maintain a present perspective. Participants learn to better manage their anger and stress at home, in the workplace and in school. In 2017 there were three RELAX: Alternatives to Anger series offered in Osceola County with 19 participants. Highlights from the program evaluation are as follows: 64% reduced their frequency in yelling and screaming, 64% now work to be calm and talk things through, 83% talk things through until they reach a solution and 58% now know what triggers their anger at others.

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers** is a new evidence-based program offered by MSU Extension and is designed to help family caregivers make their way through caring for a family member or friend with a chronic condition. In six weekly classes, caregivers learn about self-care tools to: reduce stress, communicate effectively with family and healthcare providers; deal with difficult feelings such as depression, guilt and anger; and make tough caregiving decisions. One series was held in Wexford County, this past year with 11 participants. One-time presentations were also presented on Farm Stress, Mindfulness, RELAX: Alternatives to Anger, teaching children self-regulation skills, Mindfulness for preschoolers with participants from across the county and state for a total of over 500 people receiving educational information from Social Emotional Health Educator Shannon Lindquist.

Comments received from participants of Powerful Tools for Caregivers included:

*"Learning to take care of myself, has been a huge uplift for me!"*

*"Before I started these classes I felt like I was drowning. Having to be a caregiver for both my father and mother, I felt so frustrated and alone. These classes have been such a life-saver for me."*



# Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



**Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.**

When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals. They also explore public policy issues related to environmental stewardship. Our programs can lead to increased income for families that retain their natural resource assets, help landowners become better stewards of their land, and protect land management opportunities for future generations. Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

## Hey what is this weed? Is it bad?

Each year the MSU Extension office receives a multitude of insects, weeds and diseased plants to identify. The landowners usually have the same general questions – what is this, is it bad, and what should I do about it? Most often they are species that have been around for ages and they may be important for the landowner to control but will not severely impact the rest of society in general.

However every once in a while something a little more significant does come along. In the summer of 2017 a farmer asked what is this weed growing along the edge of my hay field? After some investigation Jerry Lindquist determined the weed is Wild Parsnip, a new weed to Osceola County and one that brings some health concerns to humans. Wild Parsnip looks like a yellow version of Queen Anne's lace, or some say it looks like garden Dill. If the internal juices of Wild Parsnip come in contact with human skin during pulling or cutting the plant stem, the skin develops a rash or burn in many cases worse than poison ivy.

Upon further investigation Jerry found the weed along the White Pine Trail across much of Osceola County and all the way up to Cadillac and at a few road corners in Osceola

**Wild parsnip discovery on the White Pine Trail**



County. It appears the weed seed was brought in when construction was initially done on the White Pine Trail and on some county roads, possibly in the mulch straw that was used for bank reseeding. It has slowly grown in population and it is starting to spread beyond those initial planting areas. Jerry has notified some of the local property owners including the DNR and Road Commission and has advised them on control measures. He will work with the media this summer to warn the public of this new concern.

# Supporting Food and Agriculture

*Ninety-six percent of respondents reported that they would consider implementing or expanding use of management practices and tools based on information presented at the conference.*

## Highland Ag and Natural Resources Conference

Michigan State University Extension, in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Missaukee, Osceola and Wexford County Conservation Districts, held the second annual Highland Ag and Natural Resources Conference. The goal of the conference was to provide a variety of one hour, concurrent educational sessions with a variety of topics such as; weed management, soil health, estate planning, wildlife management, farm efficiency, using drones and more. The conference was held at Baker College Cadillac Campus and had ninety-six people registered for the event. Twenty-eight people from Osceola County attended. Multiple sponsors and vendors also attended.

## Manure Happens



## Ag Transportation and Safety

In January 2017, a workshop sponsored by Missaukee Farm Bureau was held in Missaukee County. This MAEAP Phase I meeting featured MSU Extension's Shelby Burlew, statewide Livestock Environmental Educator. She provided a presentation on "Emergency Response to Manure Spills: Are You Prepared?" The workshop was designed to help ensure all farms have an emergency response plan in place.

Shelby also provided an educational session on "MSU's Enviro-Impact Tool for Manure Applications". Through funding from the Great Lakes Restorative Initiative, National Weather Service, and NOAA, Michigan (and other great lakes states) is developing an online tool for the Michigan Manure Management Advisory System <https://enviroimpact.iwr.msu.edu>.

## Focus on the First 24 Hours (of a calf's life)

The first 24 hours of a calf's life can significantly influence its longevity and productivity in the herd. MSU Extension dairy educators highlighted key factors in managing newborn dairy calves at a meeting held in Falmouth on February 14, 2017.

Dairy farm owners, farm employees and agribusiness professionals attended this MSU Extension program to learn about the latest research and strategies to improve long-term health and growth of dairy replacements from the first day.

The meeting focused on the benefits of feeding ample quantities of high quality colostrum to the calf, management of the maternity pen, appropriate intervention during birth, handling the newborn calf for optimum health, and minimizing stress of the calf during winter conditions.



## Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

### Sheep Production

Sheep production in Osceola County is not one of the largest Ag enterprises, but there are a number of farms in Osceola County where the sale of lambs is a major source of income.

About every five years the MSU Extension Office holds a sheep production meeting to update these farms. In 2017 a series of three sheep meetings were held in Lake City, Reed City and Big Rapids, each meeting addressing different topics of sheep management including nutrition, breeding management, predator control, flock health including internal parasite control which is a critical problem as parasites become more resistant to common sheep wormers. Speakers included Dr. Ben Bartlett and his wife Denise who operate a sheep flock in the U.P. of Michigan with Denise being the current President of the Michigan Sheep Producers Association; Dr. Richard Ehrhardt of the MSU Animal Science Department; Isaac Matchett a young sheep producer from Charlevoix, MI. who runs over 1,200 ewes; and Jerry Lindquist of MSU Extension. Over 40 flock owners from Osceola, Missaukee, Wexford Counties and beyond attended the series with great appreciation for the information they gained.



Dr. Richard Ehrhardt from MSU presents at the Sheep Production series

### Farm Financial Management

Dairy farm milk prices have been depressed for several years. MSU Extension offered programs and resources to help families deal with financial stress on their dairy farms.

*Milk Check Economics:* The on-farm milk prices are impacted by several factors – federal milk marketing programs, cooperative/processor aspects and on-farm specifics. This meeting looked at the features of dairy farm milk checks and how each factor is calculated. By understanding the milk pricing system, dairy farmers can determine what aspects of their milk price they can influence.

Dairy producers, agribusiness professionals and agricultural lenders attended this meeting in Cadillac on December 1, 2017. Presentations were made by Dr. Chris Wolf, MSU Dept. of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, and Kathy Lee, MSU Extension dairy educator.

In addition, Shannon Lindquist, MSU Extension educator, provided information about resources available to help people dealing with stress, including the financial stress being experienced by some dairy farm families.

*Farm Stress:* A meeting for Agri -Businesses to help them deal with dairy farmers that are suffering economic stress was held in Big Rapids

*Individual Farm Financial Assistance:* MSU Extension educators worked individually with dairy farms to identify opportunities to improve production efficiency and their financial status. Financial analysis tools were used to monitor various measures of profitability and develop projected cash flow budgets.



MSU Extension Farm Management Educator Roger Betz talks to area agri-business owners and agencies about dealing with the farm economic crisis.

# Supporting Food and Agriculture

*Helping Osceola County farmers grow our economy and protect the environment.*



## 2017 MSU Agriculture Innovation Day – Focus on Forages and the Future

The second annual MSU Agriculture Innovation Day was held on August 24, 2017 at the MSU Lake City Research Center. MSU Agriculture Innovation Day is an annual event which focuses in-depth education on a single topic.

The 2017 educational field day delivered a cutting-edge, in-depth look at forages, dairy and livestock, and the future to help farmers meet growing producer demands. Leading experts from MSU and across the country shared the latest research and provided practical demonstrations for participants to improve their bottom line with new strategies that also improve or protect the environment.

The educational sessions addressed new research on reduced lignin alfalfa, new technology to improve silage quality, better methods to produce baleage, ways to stretch acreage for manure application, and several sessions regarding improved methods in beef production. Each session highlighted key ideas needed for successful implementation and showed financial analysis of how these ideas will impact farm profitability. Over 150 people from across Michigan attended this field day.



## Agricultural Meetings of Importance

Other important agricultural meetings that were held in the Osceola County area in 2017:

- The Restricted Use Pesticide Review & Exam in Cadillac
- The Osceola County Soil Health Tour in LeRoy & Hersey



MSU Extension's Christina Curell speaks on cover crops and their benefits at the Osceola Soil Health Tour near LeRoy.

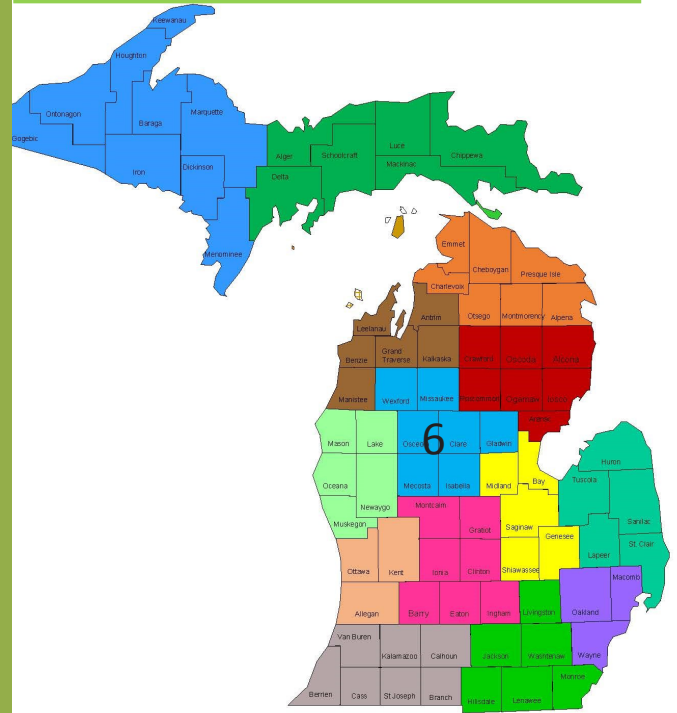
**Additional MSU Extension Staff  
Serving Osceola County:**

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John Amrhein	Governance & Public Policy
Bindu Bhakta	Water Resources
Kay Cummings	Product Center Counseling
Christina Curell	Environmental & Water Quality
Pam Daniels	Disease Prevention & Management
Rebecca Finneran	Consumer Horticulture
James Isleib	Beginning Farmers
Kathy Lee	Dairy
Teagen Lefere	Financial & Homeownership Education
Erin Lizotte	Integrated Pest Management
Kara Lynch	Food Safety
Mike Metzger	Small Ruminants
Andy Northrop	Tourism
Jill O'Donnell	Christmas Trees
Ben Phillips	Pollinators
Bev Przystas	Youth Life Skills
Kable Thurlow	Beef
Tracy Trautner	Early Childhood

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Jack Kleinhardt (Commissioner)  
Christine Hammond

**Gladwin County**

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**Isabella County**

Jerry Jaloszynski (Commissioner)  
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Frank Vanderwal (Commissioner)

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Chris Gentry—Chair  
Pam Wayne (Commissioner)  
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